



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014

March 19, 1970

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Professor, Department of Genetics  
Stanford University School  
of Medicine  
Stanford Medical Center  
300 Pasteur Drive  
Palo Alto, California 94304

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

It would be greatly appreciated if you would give me an informal evaluation of the enclosed proposal to use facilities and personnel at Fort Detrick to investigate the possibility of supplying missing genetic material to victims of inborn errors of metabolism.

As you are probably aware, serious discussions at the highest government level are underway with the object of transferring the magnificent facilities at Fort Detrick to civilian operation for the improvement of the Nation's health rather than for military purposes.

Although NIH has an urgent need for such facilities we obviously do not have the funds available to support more than a very small part of this expensive operation. However, if this problem is resolved there will be a need to select those projects for which the facility is most suitable which are most likely to be of long-range benefit to the Nation's health.

While "Genetic Engineering" has implications that go far beyond the parochial needs of an institute devoted to neurological diseases and disorders of communication, so many diseases involving metabolic defects strongly affect the nervous sensory and muscular systems and thus fall within the mission of NINDS (the lipidoses, muscular dystrophies, phenylketonuria, diabetes, etc.). Successes in treating these diseases alone would justify the expense of such an undertaking.

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I would particularly appreciate comments with regard to the feasibility of the proposal and the qualifications of the personnel involved (if you know them) to undertake this task.

Your opinion would, of course, be kept in the strictest confidence.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Edward F. MacNichol, Jr." in a cursive script.

Edward F. MacNichol, Jr., Ph.D.  
Director, National Institute of  
Neurological Diseases and Stroke

Enclosure

cc:  
Director, IR, NINDS